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Hyland Crest outbreak declared over

by **CHAD INGRAM**
Editor

A COVID-19 outbreak that had been declared at the Hyland Crest long-term care facility in Minden on Jan. 31 was declared over on Feb. 14.

The outbreak was declared after two essential caregivers tested positive for the virus. Tests for residents and staff came back negative on Feb. 3 and Feb. 6, respectively.

"Obviously this is a tremendous relief for everyone and a strong testament to the efficacy of infection prevention and control measures utilized by staff," Haliburton Highlands Health Services CEO Carolyn Plummer said in a statement. "All of the protocols we have put in place, and the diligence of staff in ensuring their implementation, are what prevented the spread to residents and staff. I have the utmost gratitude for the team at Hyland Crest and all of our staff across the organization."

Residents had been in isolation since the outbreak was declared, and will now be able to resume socially distant activities within the home.

Residents of Hyland Crest received a first round of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on Feb. 10, and families will be notified about the date for the second round of vaccinations once it becomes available.



Wildcats kick it up

Archie Stouffer Elementary School senior student Adam Davis launches the ball into the air during a soccer-baseball game on Friday, Feb. 12 in Minden. The Grade 7/8 class ends most days with physical education outside. /DARREN LUM Staff

Residents want better communication of landfill regulations

by **CHAD INGRAM**
Editor

A survey regarding the waste disposal activities of the Township of Minden Hills has found that one of the things residents most want is better communication of landfill

rules.

Councillors received a report on the survey, conducted in November, from waste facilities manager Tara Stephen during a Feb. 11 meeting. As Stephen noted, the survey had a fairly high rate of participation, with nearly 430 responses. Of the respondents, 60 per cent were seasonal residents, and 26 per cent of those seasonal residents indicated

they had plans to transition their cottages into their year-round homes at some point in the future.

"This is going to have an interesting effect on our demographic," Stephen said, noting that while currently the majority of Minden Hills residents are seasonal ones, that within a five-year window, the majority of residents

see **SURVEY** page 2

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Survey shows more year-round residents on the way

from page 1

could be year-round, with more year-round residents added in the years thereafter.

“As this population shifts, we just need to be aware, when we’re looking at our waste services, about whether or not the services we’re providing, and the way we’re providing them, are still doing a good job for the type of community we have,” Stephen said. “So we need to continually be assessing whether or not it’s appropriate to have people driving to waste sites to continue to dispose of their waste or we need to be changing the services in some way to keep people in their homes as they age into the end parts of their lives.”

Stephen said the survey results indicated the transition from seasonal residents to year-round residents for some was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“When we asked why people were relocating to the community, if they had been relocating to the community recently, a lot of them cited that changes in work arrangements, or a desire to get out of a heavily populated area prompted their move to the community,” she said. “So, we’re seeing COVID have a bit of an effect there on us, as a typically seasonal community.”

Seventy-five per cent of respondents indicated their household generates one bag of waste or less per week, with six per cent of respondents indicating they meet or exceed the township’s three-bag limit. There is a fee for more than three bags of waste.

“So that’s really good news, that means that in general people are taking advantage of all of the waste services that are available to them,” Stephen said.

She said the people who are using the three-bag limit are generating 15 per cent of the waste that goes into the landfill. “So there’s an opportunity there to maybe review our bag limit and drop it down a little bit, so that we can generate a revenue from this small percentage of the population, or

encourage them to participate in the diversion programs,” she said. “And by doing that, if we just drop it to a two-bag limit, we’re not affecting 85 per cent of our population. So that’s one small action as a municipality that we could take to improve our waste performance and increase the long-term capacity of our landfill site.”

The survey found residents feel the township could be doing a much better job on making education materials about landfill procedures available.

“First of all, the bulk of the people who are trying to access information about waste services in Minden Hills are trying to do so through the website,” Stephen said. “And overwhelmingly, the feedback about the website was that it was not really usable, and that the information that was on it was unreliable and disorganized.”

Staff have taken time over the past year to improve the waste management section of the township website, Stephen said, but indicated there was still room for improvement. The township has also introduced use of the Waste Wizard app, which Stephen said has had high uptake.

Stephen said that 25 per cent of respondents said they relied on word of mouth to find out about the township’s waste disposal services, and 10 per cent indicated they relied on social media posts created by other people.

“And we don’t love this,” she said. “This is how misinformation gets spread, this is how we end up with people being very confused about what’s going on with their services. So what we need to do is focus on improving the quality of outreach as far as waste services go, to make sure people are confident in our communications, and can look to us for the information, rather than trying to get it from friends and neighbours and relatives.”

The survey asked residents how they’d like to receive information, and found support for the concept of an annual waste guide, which has been included in the department’s draft operating budget.

Under the topic of customer experience and service, “this is where the work is going to have to start for us,” Stephen said. Residents were asked to rank various service factors, from most important to least important. “We did wind up with the majority of the community saying that the most important thing to them was that the rules around waste management were easy to understand,” Stephen said. “And we have some work to do here.”

In the past, Stephen said rules have not been applied consistently, and the township has been working toward improving consistency, including new policies coming forward for council approval. “Part of getting the rules in a state where they’re easy for people to understand will be making sure that there are clear policies in place, that we consistently then follow.”

Stephen had converted the results into a grade score, and said the township would currently receive a C- for services performance standards.

“I would say there’s room for improvement, as you’ve pointed out, in a number of areas,” said Mayor Brent Devolin. “I think, most of us that have been around a few years, if we’d have done the same thing a couple of years ago, I’m not sure we’d have even gotten a C- ... Obviously there’s a lot of work to be done, in Minden Hills and the county, with respect to this.”

Many survey respondents said they’d like to see collaboration between the county’s township to allow residents access to all landfill sites, regardless of what township they live in, and one of the recommendations from the service delivery review the County of Haliburton recently had completed was harmonization of landfill activities, with consistent regulations, hours, etc.

Both Councillor Bob Carter and Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell expressed opposition to the idea of lowering the bag limit to two, saying it might mean people would stop taking garbage to the landfill for neighbours, elderly family members, etc.

Times/Echo up for multiple OCNA awards

The *Minden Times* and sister publication the *Haliburton County Echo* have been nominated in numerous categories for this year’s Ontario Community Newspaper Association’s Better Newspapers Competition.

For the *Times*, Sue Tiffin is nominated in the education writing category for a story about families facing back-to-school decisions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Chad Ingram is nominated for news writing for a story about a fatal police shooting last July, stemming from a dispute that occurred when a customer was asked to put on a face mask to enter a local grocery store. *Times* columnist Jim Poling Sr. is nominated for Columnist of the Year.

The *Echo* is nominated for general excellence in its circulation class, and former editor Jenn Watt is nominated for stories in the education, health and heritage categories, as well as best headline writing. Darren Lum is nominated in the arts category for a story about an artist capturing self-portraits in self-isolation, as well as in the sports category. The *Echo* is nominated for best sports photo, best sports section, and Lum is nominated for the OCNA’s Photographer of the Year.

A nomination means either a first, second or third place finish, with the results to be announced virtually on April 23.

Staff

Foundation on a roll

Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation’s executive director Lisa Tompkins, at front right, reads the winning ticket belonging to Stephen Tinling of Toronto, who won the \$20,000 prize in the annual Cash for Care Cash Lottery. Tompkins was joined by board chairperson Eric Recalla, director, Cathy Mack, and vice-chairperson David Zilstra on Feb. 15. Other winning tickets belonged to Jack and Loretta Billings for \$2,000 and Betty Austin for \$1,500. The annual draw, which sold 84 per cent of tickets printed, exceeding last years total, will help to raise funds for a vital signs monitor. /DARREN LUM Staff

County council passes 2021 budget

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

Haliburton County councillors passed the 2021 budget during a Feb. 10 meeting, the final budget containing a tax increase of 3.84 per cent.

Councillors had first reviewed the budget during a Jan. 11 meeting. Since then, it was learned the county’s insurance costs would be higher than had been budgeted for the year, however, that was offset by increased property assessment values, received from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. The 2021 budget includes the addition of an

economic development officer on county staff, although that position will be funded through Safe Restart funding from the provincial government.

“It happened in a timely fashion and certainly a comfortable number in a COVID year to move forward,” said Minden Hills Mayor Brent Devolin. “So, I do not have any reservations.”

“I think it’s a good, modest increase,” said Algonquin Highlands Deputy Mayor and County Warden Liz Danielsen. “It’s my fear that next year and the years following we’re going to see some pretty severe impacts from upper levels of government, and we will not be able to continue at this rate, sadly.”



County to post shoreline FAQs for public

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

The County of Haliburton will create and post answers to frequently asked questions regarding a shoreline preservation bylaw, to be housed on the county's website.

As previously reported, during a Jan. 27 meeting, county council voted to discontinue the in-house process that had been in place surrounding the creation of a shoreline preservation bylaw, and issue a request for proposals for a consulting firm to conduct scientific reviews, public consultation, and then produce a draft bylaw. That decision came after widespread public criticism that the draft bylaw that had been up for public review was too restrictive and difficult to understand.

While it will take months for a firm to be hired and then complete its work, Algonquin Highlands Mayor Carol Moffatt said during a Feb. 10 online meeting that she would at least like to see the county proceed with creating a sort of one-page, FAQ document with answers to some frequently asked questions. There has been some suggestion in the community the draft bylaw would prevent residents from cutting their lawns, or trim their hedges, and Moffatt said it should be simple enough for the county to create a document to put those kinds of concerns to rest.

"I am going to circle back again to try to find a way to alleviate the concerns the public has," Moffatt said. "Just because the emails have stopped for the time being, doesn't mean the questions have gone away. So I want to ask again about a FAQ. I don't understand why we can't do our own work toward alleviating some questions and concerns on some sim-



pler issues, such as yes, you can mow your lawn, and yes, you can prune your trees, and no, if you're planning to rebuild your cottage and it's within the 30 metres (a proposed setback distance for site alternation in the previous draft bylaw), you don't have to move it behind the proposed 30 metres."

Moffatt said providing such a document could help streamline the public consultation process, since many such concerns could be alleviated.

"I will bend to the will of council, obviously, but I find it incomprehensible why we can't just simply put together a little, quick FAQ to give the public the answers to some of the questions, the most common questions that we're being asked," Moffatt said.

"I've been harping on this for some time now, and it just sounds continually like, well, we can and we could and we

might," Moffatt continued. "OK, when? The public still has questions and we have, thus far, failed to answer most of them."

"I don't think we failed to answer, I think we failed to communicate," said Dysart et al Mayor Andrea Roberts. "... We need to get on top of the information. We need to be the source."

Minden Hills Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell said she agreed with Moffatt.

"I think we're making something bigger than it has to be," Schell said. "I think we obviously need to let the consultant, when we get one, do their thing, but in the interim, there's no reason why the county can't provide just a simple FAQ on the website, to the questions that were asked repeatedly in those hundreds of emails that we received. I congratulate Councillor Moffatt for continually pushing on this, because it's important stuff."

Minden Hills Brent Devolin said he thought the online environment necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic provided opportunities and had also led to the volume of feedback that councillors had received on the draft shoreline bylaw.

"I think a by-product of COVID, with YouTube, is, we're in a changing landscape, and I think there's a mechanism there that's allowed the public to get engaged that never did before. We can use that constructively. But, that's why ... I think if COVID hadn't happened, the onslaught of feedback that we've got wouldn't be of the scale that it is."

"As I've said since 2014, I would like to see connectivity and video-streaming at all levels of government with a video data bank, become a permanent legacy," Devolin added.

Moffatt eventually tabled a motion saying she'd like to see a FAQ created and posted publicly on the county website as soon as possible, with that motion approved by council.

Keep eyes open for Hydro One letters

by CHAD INGRAM
Editor

Seasonal residents in the county may want to keep an eye out for letters from Hydro One, with details on the next step of the process by which the Ontario Energy Board is eliminating the seasonal rate class.

As previously reported, on Sept. 17, the Ontario Energy Board, the province's energy regulator, ruled to uphold a 2015 directive that Hydro One eliminate the seasonal rate classification from its billing system, placing seasonal prop-

erties under existing density-based classifications, based on their physical location.

"Every seasonal resident will be receiving a detailed letter from Hydro One," Spencer Gill, vice president of customer service for the utility, told the *Times*, explaining those letters contained information on how customers could provide input on the next phases of implementation.

The crux of the OEB's justification for the change is that under the seasonal property classification, seasonal property owners, depending on the location of their properties, do not necessarily pay their fair share in terms of infrastructure and delivery costs. Seasonal properties will be reclassified as either medium-

density (R1) or low-density (R2), and bills for properties that are re-classified as R2 are the ones that will see an increase, of close to \$1,000 per year in some cases, according to Hydro One. Of the approximately 154,000 seasonal properties in Ontario, some 84,000 will be reclassified as R2, and some 70,000 as R1. It's possible that properties in the R1 category will see only small increases, effectively no change, or even small decreases in the size of their bills, depending upon location.

Implementation of the new billing structure could come as soon as 2022, and Gill said he encouraged all seasonal customers to get involved by providing input.



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SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Are you a student looking for a great summer job? The Township of Minden Hills is currently accepting resumes for Summer Students for our **Community Services Department in Parks** and at our **Minden Hills Cultural Centre as Heritage Interpreters**.

Both positions are for a 16 week period from May to August with the rate of pay being \$14.25/hour, pending 2021 budget and grant funding approval.

Please visit our website at www.minden hills.ca/employment-opportunities/ for posting details, job requirements and submission instructions, or email sprentice@minden hills.ca



(VIRTUAL) COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Committee of the Whole meetings are currently being conducted virtually via web conference and Closed Session meetings via teleconference, until further notice. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

The schedule of upcoming meetings are:

February 25 – Regular Council Meeting
March 11 – Committee of the Whole Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link available on the township website at www.minden hills.ca/council/ or by using the direct link provided in the notice. We encourage those wishing to view the meeting to also download the agenda, as it will not be displayed during the streaming process. Meeting agendas can be downloaded by visiting our website at www.minden hills.ca/council/.

Please note the live-stream link provided for each meeting will only be activated while Council is in session.

REQUEST FOR RATES

RFR #RDS 21-01 Truck and Equipment Rental Rates

The Township is seeking bids for hourly rates for the rental of construction equipment for a four (4) year term (2021-2024). The deadline for submissions is February 24, 2021 by 12:00 noon.

RFR# RDS 21-02 Aggregate and Material Rates

The Township is seeking bids for aggregate and material rates for a four (4) year term (2021-2024). The deadline for submissions is March 1, 2021 by 12:00 noon.

Visit www.minden hills.ca/tenders for more information or to download the Request for Rates documents.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or 'back feed' can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

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Presentation on blue-green algae blooms draws huge audience

by **SUE TIFFIN**
Times Staff

Cyanobacteria are one of the oldest organisms on the planet, evolving about three billion years ago, but there is still much for us to learn about cyanobacteria and their associated blue-green algae blooms, so last Tuesday night, more than 300 people signed up for a virtual Enviro Cafe hosted by Environment Haliburton to hear more about the ecology of what is commonly called blue-green algae.

Blue-Green Algae: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly was presented by Dr. Elizabeth Favot through a popular Zoom meeting held in the evening of Feb. 9. Favot recently completed a PhD in biology using paleolimnology to examine long-term environmental conditions and potential drivers for cyanobacterial blooms in Ontario lakes. She's a new resident to this area, and is working as assistant lake stewardship co-ordinator with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association, and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Dorset Environmental Science Centre helping to organize the Ontario Lake Partner Program, the largest citizen science water quality monitoring program of its kind in Canada.

First off, she explained, while blue-green algae is the more commonly used term, the more correct term is cyanobacteria, which is used in the scientific community. Blue-green algae are cyanobacteria, she said.

"The reason that the term blue-green algae is misleading is because cyanobacteria are actually fundamentally different from other true forms of algae like the diatoms or green algae, rather, cyanobacteria are photosynthetic bacteria."

With that said, she noted that cyanobacteria are one of the oldest organisms on the planet.

"The blue-green algae played a critical role in the evolution of nature as we know it, because they were responsible for the great oxidation event of our atmosphere," said Favot. "Because of this really long evolutionary history of three billion years, cyanobacteria are well-adapted to many different conditions and so you can find them in most illuminated environments on earth."

Currently, there are more than 2,700 described species

of cyanobacteria, though in time there will likely be more discovered.

"Of all the thousands of species of cyanobacteria, there's only a handful or a couple dozen that form blooms in fresh water," she said.

Blue-green algal blooms have been confirmed as recently as last November in Dysart et al, in Minden Hills and in Highlands East, according to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks at that time.

"There's actually no strict scientific definition but it generally describes a visible accumulation of algae, so it's [when] one or a few species come to dominate the algae community in a waterbody," said Favot. "But blooms can be measured in different ways. So, for instance, blooms can be measured based on total cell counts per litre of water, or based on the proportion of the algal community that's made up of by a certain species or based on concentrations of photosynthetic pigments like chlorophyll."

While they're referred to as blue-green algal blooms, they are actually not necessarily blue-green in colour. In her slides, Favot showed a collection of photos – three that suited the blue-green descriptor were actually duckweed, green algae, and pollen, while three photos showing cyanobacteria ranged in colour from chocolate milk brown, to spinach soup green.

"Even to the trained eye, sometimes blue-green algae blooms can be tricky to distinguish from other types of algae or other growths on the water, until a sample is put under the microscope and then it's very easy to tell," said Favot. "Generally if you see kind of a consistent, opaque, pea soup green, it could be cyanobacteria, and you can call a biologist and they'll figure it out for you."

As Favot noted, blue-green algal blooms have been on the rise worldwide, and have been detected in more and more waterbodies over the last few decades.

"In Ontario specifically, the number of confirmed cyanobacterial blooms each year ... has significantly increased over the last two decades, and the bloom occurrences are quite wide spread across the province," she said. "And although maybe you've heard that nutrient pollution from run-off is the most common culprit of cyanobacterial blooms globally, which is true, about one in four of these confirmed blue-green algal blooms in Ontario are actually from lakes with average total phosphorous concentrations in the oligotrophic, or very low range. And still more bloom reports are coming from lakes where nutrient levels have been stable or even declining in recent decades. So the lakes that my research is focused on are ones that deviate from the simple nutrient enrichment algal bloom paradigm, and [data] suggests that there may be other factors contributing to the rise of cyanobacteria across Ontario aside from simply increased nutrient runoff."

A great concern of blue-green algal blooms are their potential to produce toxins. Freshwater cyanobacteria produces four main groups of toxins: microcystins, anatoxins, saxitoxins and cylindro spermopsins, and variants fall within those broad groups.

"By far the most common toxin associated with freshwater blooms are the microcystins, which are hepatotoxic, or toxic to the liver," said Favot. "In these broad categories here, not all species within them are capable of synthesizing toxins and, this one's important, even if we know there's a species that has the potential to produce toxins, it doesn't always [produce them] and when cyanobacteria produces toxins or not, it likely depends on specific environmental conditions that we don't understand yet, so for that reason a precautionary approach is taken where if there's a suspected blue-green algal bloom we take a sample, we put it under the microscope, find out which species it is, and if it's a species that we know has the ability to produce toxins, we assume that toxins could be present until the bloom dissipates."

Favot said the first microcystin toxin was isolated and characterized in the 1980s, yet "clearly cyanobacterial toxins are a widespread issue despite being a relatively new area of research." Health guidelines in place for microcystin are set at 1.5 micrograms per litre, total microsystems acceptable in drinking water in Canada, said Favot, and 20 micrograms per litre for recreational waters.

She noted the consequences of freshwater cyanobacterial toxins can be serious, citing the death of 60 patients in the 1990s at a Brazilian dialysis clinic, where water used for treatment was later found to be contaminated with almost 20 micrograms per litre of microcystins, and the shutdown of tap water usage for two days in Toledo – with a population of nearly half a million people – in 2014 due to microsystem concentrations exceeding the drinking water quality standards. The message to not drink water from or swim in lakes affected by algal blooms and to heed public health advice was

reiterated by Favot as well as others joining her in a forum after the presentation.

"But it's not all just about the potential for toxin production, there are negative consequences of both toxin producing and non-toxic blooms," she said. "Of course blooms that produce toxins are a health risk to humans and animals, but whether or not blooms are toxic, the biomass produced during blooms reduces water clarity or increases turbidity, and this can lead to biodiversity loss, through a reduction in the growth of other photosynthetic aquatic organisms."

"The increased turbidity or reduced water clarity associated with blooms also reduces aesthetic and economic value of the water body," she said. "Bottom water oxygen depletion, which is associated with the end of blooms when excess organic material is being decomposed, can reduce the suitable habitat available for certain aquatic organisms, and result in fish kills and can also exacerbate internal nutrient loading from the sediments at the bottom of the lake, which can then result in a kind of positive feedback cycle that can further bolster future blooms."

While research is still occurring to help determine the complex causes of algal blooms, three main categories can be used to "conceptually organize the interacting factors that can lead to blooms," said Favot: weather conditions that lead to warm and stagnant water, elevated nutrients due to both natural and human-caused sources, and food web alterations, or changes in algae consumption by upper food web organisms.

"The dreaded climate change can alter conditions across all three of these categories, to make conditions more favourable for blooms to occur and so it can be kind of thought of as a threat multiplier in the case of conditions that promote cyanobacterial blooms," she said.

Favot also explained the process of thermal stratification in lakes; discussed her PhD research involving paleolimnology, a branch of lake science that examines fossil material in lake sediment to determine the environmental history of an ecosystem; her work on lakes in Ontario, enabling her to compare pre-disturbance conditions with today's conditions, and the consequences of climate warming in making conditions favourable for blue-green algal blooms.

"The best thing we can do is try to prevent blooms from occurring in the first place and one of the easiest ways to do that is to minimize nutrient pollution running off from human activities in the catchment," she explained. "And a very easy way to do that is to intercept nutrients running off the land with terrestrial plants which can sequester these nutrients before they reach the lake. There will always be ecological surprises especially since there are so many interacting factors that can lead to blooms but I do believe that with further research we will be able to pinpoint specific lakes that may be most sensitive to developing future algal blooms, and maybe a good start to that is to look towards lakes that have moderate nutrient levels or are classified as mesotrophic and lakes that are relatively shallow so that low oxygen conditions develop rapidly with thermal stratification. Lastly, I found that bottom water oxygen and nutrient concentrations indicating the occurrence of internal nutrient loading, might be more useful for determining the potential for blooms than surface water concentrations and so for groups that have the means we should try to incorporate oxygen profiles or a bottom water chemistry sample into our monitoring programs. So while it takes a lot of highly specialized work and time, understanding environmental histories is the key to putting current water quality issues into context and establishing baseline conditions is critical to inform management targets for parameters like nutrients."

"Cyanobacteria are among the most ancient organisms on earth and when they're in balance with the rest of the ecosystem they're an essential and beneficial component," said Favot. "However, blooms or excessive growth of certain species of cyanobacteria can have very negative ecosystem level impacts and unfortunately we expect that with continued climate change, blue-green algal blooms will become increasingly frequent and severe moving into the future."

The presentation included a forum with Professor Barb Elliott from Fleming College and Dr. Norman Yan, research scientist, and a question-and-answer period from the audience.

To watch Favot's presentation in full, visit environmenthaliburton.org.

For more information about the Lake Partner Program and how you might help by monitoring your lake, visit Environment Haliburton's website at <https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-overview/>.

Environment Haliburton's next Enviro Cafe will be held virtually, via Zoom, on March 9 at 7:30 pm.



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Haliburton County reopens in Orange-Restrict level

As of Feb. 16 at 12:01 a.m., more businesses could reopen in Haliburton County, and small social gatherings were allowed once again after the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit moved from provincial lockdown measures that included a stay-at-home order, to the Orange-Restrict category of Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework.

At a Feb. 10 press conference prior to the announcement, Dr. Ian Gemmill, acting medical officer of health, strongly urged caution.

"While our legal obligation to limit travel and gatherings will end when the stay-at-home order is lifted, we still have a moral obligation to continue doing all we can to stop

the spread of COVID-19," he said in a health unit press release on Feb. 12. "I am pleading with people not to gather with others and to continue to stay home and only go out for essential reasons."

While cases of COVID-19 have been declining in the province as well as locally, Gemmill said the virus is still circulating, and new variants of concern – one which was identified in Northumberland County on Feb. 9 – can spread more quickly than the original virus, leading to a sudden surge of COVID-19 infections. "We may be open for business, but we can't assume it's business as usual," Gemmill said. "Until more people are vaccinated and we

can get COVID-19 under control, we must continue doing all we can to stop the spread. Otherwise, we will lose the momentum we've gained over the past six weeks of the shutdown."

Prior to the province-wide shutdown taking effect in late December, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit – which includes Haliburton County – had been in the Yellow-Protect level.

The move to the Orange COVID-19 level means local restaurants and bars can reopen for in-person dining as well as continue to offer take-out, pick-up and delivery; worship services, weddings and funerals can resume; gyms and fitness clubs, in-person shopping,

personal care services and movie theatres and performing arts centres can reopen. Small social gatherings can once again happen in private homes, backyards and parks with people from different households, with up to 10 people gathered indoors, and up to 25 people outdoors. Masks must be worn and people from different households must stay two metres apart.

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit is one of 27 public health regions that reopened on Feb. 16, while Toronto, Peel and York regions and the North Bay-Parry Sound district will remain in shutdown.

- Staff

LTC coalition passes declaration to 'fix' long-term care in Canada

by MIKE BAKER

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The percentage of long-term care COVID-19 deaths in Canada is the highest in the world, Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition, told a group of around 50 Haliburton area residents earlier this month.

Speaking during a town hall forum hosted by the Haliburton-City of Kawartha Lakes Long-Term Care Coalition on Feb. 1, Mehra said statistics coming out of Canada's retirement and nursing homes makes for grim reading.

As of Feb. 12, there have been 21,088 COVID-19 related deaths nationwide. A recent CBC report states that around 70 per cent of coronavirus deaths in Canada have

been long-term care residents.

In doing the rough math, that means more than 14,750 of our seniors have died since the onset of the pandemic last March.

"We know there have been problems with the long-term care system for years. COVID-19 has really shed a tragic light on the crisis and the issues across our community, across our province and throughout Canada," said Bonnie Roe, co-chair of the local LTC coalition.

She joined forces with Mike Perry, a local lawyer, in establishing the coalition last May. In essence, the pair hope to inspire systemic change to the country's long-term care system.

The coalition has established a list of six core priorities it intends to chip away at over the coming months. Right at the top of the list is advocating for the inclusion of long-

term care to the Canada Health Act, a move that Perry says will completely change the way the sector operates.

"We need to fix the system. When you think about it, long-term care is considered to be a part of general healthcare. So, really, it should be under the Canada Health Act. Doing that does two things – it makes funding exclusively public, and it also provides national standards. Enforceable national standards," Perry said.

The group also wants to increase staffing to ensure all residents receive at least four hours per day of direct care; reinstate annual resident quality inspections of all long-term care homes, with consistency in enforcement when inspections yield rule violations; explore new models of care; change the culture of long-term care to be more attentive to the value of elders; and stop for-profit com-

panies from opening new nursing homes in Ontario.

During the meeting on Feb. 1, the 50 residents in virtual attendance voted unanimously to support a motion lobbying for those fixes to be implemented.

It was a moving moment for Perry, whose late mother Mary was a resident of a nursing home in Lindsay.

"This is about how we as a society value and care for our elders. We want local voices to be part of the solution province-wide and to make sure we support our front-line workers while working to fix things," Perry said. "With so many people coming together and on the same page, there really is room to keep working with some hope."

For more information on the coalition, visit www.ltcneedsyou.ca.

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Published by White Pine Media Corp

Funded by the Government of Canada | **Canada**

Monday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Tuesday to Friday 9 a.m. - noon
Letters to the Editor must be signed and include phone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Email must include name and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.
All Subscriptions: \$46/ per year or \$88 for 2 years
Subscriptions must be prepaid. Call Debbie @ 705-286-1288

An obituary for the snow day

AS I WRITE this, buses in the county and elsewhere within the Trillium Lakelands District School Board have been cancelled due to inclement weather and road conditions.

Buses have been cancelled, but with the digital, at-home learning environment fostered by the COVID-19 pandemic, school is still on. In fact, it stands to reason that the elimination of snow days will be one of the many legacies of the virus. Too dangerous for buses to run? Get on the computer and fire up the Google Meet, kids.

And so let us pause for a moment of silence, a moment of reflection, on what is very likely the demise of the hallowed

snow day, at least as it once existed.

Snow days were a silver lining of winter for Canadian kids; the constant chance that with enough of a dumping, you'd get a random day off school. They could come at any time, and that was part of their magic; an unanticipated bit of freedom in the middle of the week, or, maybe at either end, for an unanticipated long weekend. If you were the gambling type and there was a big snowstorm happening, perhaps you didn't even bother completing your homework for the following day.

Remember the feeling? The relief, the unmitigated joy. For a kid, a day, a *whole day*, can seem like quite a bit of time, too.

For those of my vintage and

beyond, you of course didn't turn to Facebook or Twitter to find out if it was a snow day. You either turned on the television to a local cable station, or tuned into the radio. That's the way it worked at our house, my sister and I turning on the Lindsay radio station the morning after a snowstorm. At that point, bus cancellations came less frequently in large swaths, with buses often still cancelled by route. So, like someone holding a lottery

ticket, you waited anxiously for your bus number to be called out. Then, when it was, complete exaltation, and you told your mom, "I told you so!" Or maybe that was just me.

Your books stayed in your bag, and you went outside. For



CHAD INGRAM
Editor

my sister and me, that typically meant snow forts in the yard, and tobogganing on the hill at our grandparents' farm, located just up the street. It meant games of road hockey with other neighbourhood kids. I remember once freezing rain leaving our street so thickly coated in ice that kids were actually skating on it. Our street was also located on a hill, so, in retrospect, that was wildly dangerous. Memories.

Snow days meant coming back into the house, your socks and pants soaked, throwing your wet clothes by the fireplace before having some hot chocolate and watching a movie to recuperate.

Snow days were magnificent. May they rest in peace.

Kwarky



"If it cheers you up, everyone's in lockdown."

How the ice hut was born

THE OTHER day I was standing alone on the ice, in the middle of a snow-covered lake, looking down a hole that local fish had agreed to never pass through, when I raised my head, felt the bitter sting of a howling wind and muttered, "I cannot imagine a more pathetic existence."

But that's only because most of my brain had partially froze.

That's also when I started mulling over one of the most important questions to plague humanity. Namely, how did the ice hut come to be?

There are many theories, but the one I favour is as follows.

I believe some time just after the first tool was accidentally invented, men started collecting them. Not for an honest day's work, mind you – for that had, thankfully, not been yet invented. No, tools were first conceived for purely social reasons. For if a man had a tool, he could lend it to another man, and one day he could visit that man to remind him that he had not yet returned it.

This caught on and, eventually, men collected so many tools that their wives told them that they needed to find another place outside of the cave to store them.

Our tool-laden ancestors gave some thought to the idea and then they used mostly borrowed tools to build the first shed. At first, the shed was just a space where a man could put his tools and, afterwards, his lawn mower. But eventually, men came to realize that a shed was no place for a goat, so it reverted back to being just for tools.

That remained the case until the first

marital spat was invented. This came shortly after the question, "Be honest. Do you think Grog's sister is pretty?" was initially posed.

This led to that man sleeping in the shed for a few nights.

By now you are probably wondering what all this has to do with ice fishing.

Well, let me tell you.

About 400 BC, one of our angling ancestors found himself in a fairly prolonged argument with his wife, but only because he foolishly thought there was a chance he could win.

Worse still, that argument happened in the dead of winter and so he found himself sleeping in the shed with all his tools and his new fishing gear.

On the second day of the argument, she was still being unreasonable and insisting that the wall of the cave be adorned with petroglyphs depicting her mother and their wedding rather than several sets of tastefully

arranged deer and moose antlers.

Still gullible enough to believe honesty is the best policy, he told her the reason for this was that old antlers were visually more appealing than those things.

This led to a lot more time living in the shed where, eventually, a clever thought occurred to him.

"If I'm going to be living here for the winter, why not drag the shed down to the lake where I can at least fish, while trying to think of a clever argument to convince her I was right?" he mused.

Other men, by necessity, discovered the wisdom in this too. And it worked.

Was a clever argument ever found?

Who knows? But ice huts have been on our lakes ever since.



STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

IN OTHER WORDS

Columns and Letters to the Editor

Life after the pandemic

SO HERE WE are, one year later. Who would have thought that in an age when contagions are quickly spotted and quickly dealt with that COVID-19 would still be with us, more deadly dangerous than when it first arrived?

More than 109 million cases worldwide and 2.4 million deaths. Canada still experiences roughly 3,200 new cases every day and has had 21,200 reported deaths.

Beyond the actual sickness and death, COVID-19's toll has been horrifying. Economies devastated, small businesses dying, health care systems exhausted and hundreds of thousands of personal lives shattered. Millions of people not touched directly by the disease have had their lives changed dramatically.



JIM POLING SR.
From Shaman's Rock

There is no end in sight. Some experts say that after the pandemic is beaten back COVID-19 will be endemic – a disease that stays around requiring constant vigilance and vaccine updating. Much like polio, whooping cough and other diseases that are controlled but still erupt from time to time.

An important question now is what life will be like after the COVID-19 pandemic finally is subdued. Certainly, it will not simply return to what it was be-

fore the pandemic.

Social distancing policies designed to contain COVID-19 already have changed the world of work. Companies are finding that they operate reasonably well without large, costly offices.

However, more people working from home widen gaps in society. Humans are social animals who need to interact with others, and the gaps created by working apart will have to be addressed.

Workplace and work habit changes brought by COVID-19 come on top of changes already occurring. Automation, robotics and artificial intelligence have brought dramatic and stressful changes and will bring many more.

Similarly, the future of education as we knew it is in doubt. Almost 200 governments around the world closed schools during the pandemic. Tens of millions of learners were sent home to continue their learning remotely.

This has led to a huge number of drop outs, creating more less-educated people seeking work in shrinking work places.

It also raises the question of whether remote learning will increase in an attempt to save costs.

All this is creating uncertainty and anxiety. Our sense of safety and certainty about the future and our jobs and lives in general is being shaken badly.

My biggest worry is what COVID-19 is doing, and what it already has done, to our moral instincts.

When a society malfunctions, moral instincts begin to dissolve. We see this already. Tired and stressed, people have become nastier. Crime is up. Disputes are rising in once stable relationships and friendships.

The BBC reported recently that British divorce rates are soaring with one leading law firm reporting a 122-per-cent increase in inquiries between last July and October. Similar increases are being reported in the United States and China.

Sweden reported a 15-per-cent increase in joint divorce filings last summer.

Many jurisdictions around the world report increases in domestic violence during the pandemic. Close to home, Simcoe County shelters are reporting increases of 40 to 50 per cent in crisis line calls.

Post-pandemic life will be different and will require answers to questions about how to adjust to the changes.

Interestingly, some wise thinking about life after illness has been around for almost 400 years, provided by a British cleric named John Donne. After almost dying from an unknown fever in 1623, Donne wrote *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* in which he reflected upon death and human need.

Meditation XVII of *Devotions* contained two famous thoughts: "No man is an island" and "never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee."

The first expresses his belief that no one is self-sufficient and everyone must rely on others to achieve a safe and productive life.

The second is the concept that one person's death diminishes us all because we are a community of human life, not simply individuals removed from what is happening in other places.

Donne's concepts never really had huge impact on the way we live, probably because they were written in Old English during the middle ages.

They are worth thinking about now in a society that too often puts individualism ahead of working together to achieve a better world.

Productive movement

I WATCHED A video on Instagram that made me chuckle. It was a personal trainer demonstrating a workout method that uses a mace (macebell) and tractor tire. A mace is a new style of fitness equipment that consists of a metal rod and a weighted ball. Swinging the mace in different patterns develops core strength. Hitting a tire with it causes it to bounce in an uncontrolled/unpredictable fashion requiring more strength and coordination to get it under control before hitting the tire again. This seems like a great exercise but the thing that struck me was if you're gonna do all that swinging and hitting something why not split wood and be productive?

I am a country newbie. One and half years ago I made the big move from downtown Ottawa to a property just south of Haliburton. This transition has opened my eyes to the damage that comfort and convenience is doing to our bodies. For demonstration purposes I'll stick with the example of heating with wood versus other sources of energy such as gas or oil. In my world this is what's involved to keep the house warm using wood:

There's the stacking of the nine face cords of wood delivered to the house. I'm not yet ready to be cutting my own wood so I have it delivered. Last year, my first experience with this whole heating with wood thing, I looked at the six-cord pile and thought I'll get this done in a couple of hours. In a couple of hours all that I had managed to do was strain my back. Not to mention, the first attempt at a stack fell over. Wynton Marsalis says "The humble improve." I did improve. I changed my strategy to tackling the task an hour at a time until I got it done. This year I was physically stronger so it took a little less time per cord.

The second step in the process for me is splitting some of the logs. I found that the wood stove I have works better that way. I fill up a wheelbarrow and move that load down a small incline (talk about resistance training), throw the logs onto the ground

near my splitting block and then away I go. I have a six-pound splitting axe. I could have sold tickets to watch me splitting wood last winter. This year it's a whole different story. I challenge myself to hit a specific spot on the log I am splitting.

Next up, ya got to get the split wood from the ground back into the wheelbarrow and get it into the house. There it gets stacked again. I discovered that wood burns better when it's warm.

The last part is getting the wood to and into the stove. There's lots of kneeling down on one or both knees. Let's not forget the standing up part once I'm done.

All of this effort when I could just ensure that the thermostat is turned on at the beginning of the cool season. That's what life was like when I lived in Ottawa. I could still do that now but there is so much goodness rolled into the

effort that it takes to heat with wood. It's a total body workout! Sure, now I don't have the time or energy to do other things like ski or hike as much as I used to but I am accomplishing my goal of maintaining a certain level of fitness. In fact I would say I'm surpassing that goal because of how varied an activity like splitting wood is.

Comfort and convenience has left us searching for ways to get into shape. I used the stacking/splitting wood example because the swinging-the-mace video struck me as an unproductive use of time. There are other chores that require movement like washing the dishes instead of using the dishwasher or how about hanging laundry instead of throwing it in the dryer. Have a look around you and you'll find ways to move more. There are opportunities everywhere.

Gotta go throw another log on the fire!

Laurie Sweig is a certified personal fitness trainer and spinning instructor. She owns and operates The Point for Fitness. She can be reached at laurie@thepointforfitness.com.



LAURIE SWEIG
Practical Fitness



Trumpeters on the Gull

John Gibb captured this image of a line of swans swimming along the Gull River.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Guenter Horst captures life in Minden

by SUE TIFFIN
Times Staff

Guenter Horst is happy to live in Minden, happy to be in his home, with his wife, enjoying his time outdoors by taking photographs of wildlife and nature that he shares in local newspapers. Though still very active – reshingling a roof recently in his mid-70s – Guenter is in Minden after a lifetime of saying yes to any opportunity or experience that came his way.

Born in Bremen, Germany in 1945, Guenter went to school until Grade 8, the standard schooling at that time. He then learned carpentry, becoming licensed a few years later.

In 1963, he went to work as a steward for a German cruise ship company that set sail with about 500 passengers at a time.

“It was something, especially at night, the ocean was very rough,” he said. “You were scared because everything happened at night time. We tried to avoid the aftershock from a hurricane – when you have waves six and eight stories high, it becomes a little bit scary, especially at night. Your dishes and everything, furniture is just flying from one end to another [unless] it’s anchored to the floor. So, that was that.”

Over five years, he said he saw about three-quarters of the world, the longest trip being to Australia, which took three weeks, and the most memorable for him being the Panama Canal, a trip he said he would recommend to anybody.

“When there was time, we could leave the ship after our working hours, say after supper,” he said. “We went to bars and things like that, looking for girls in our younger days – I was only [a teenager] at that time.”

In 1967, Guenter’s twin brother met a Canadian and moved to Toronto with her in 1967. In 1968, Guenter followed, taking the same cruise ship he had worked on to Montreal, this time as a passenger. His brother drove from Ajax, in Ontario, to pick him up.

“We always lived in a house, so I had no idea what an apartment building was,” he said. “When we got into the building, the main lobby, I said to my brother, ‘what are all these doors in this hallway, is it like a hospital?’ I had no idea.”

Guenter had been around the world, but never into an apartment building, having always lived in the house his father and uncle built for the family.

After about a month in Canada, Guenter decided to look for work. Finding out there was a German furniture store in the High Park area, he asked there if they knew any carpenters who he might find work with, which led him to a job as a carpenter and a cabinet maker.

At that time, he could speak only some English – the numbers one through 10, and the words yes, and no.

“When somebody asked me something, and speaking in English, I always said ‘yes,’ instead of saying ‘no,’” he laughed. “I did not understand what the person was [saying.]”

Didn’t that get him into trouble, occasionally, potentially saying yes when he didn’t mean it?

“The people just look at you and don’t ask any more questions,” he said, laughing.

Guenter began learning English: from his brother and sister, from television, and by best using time spent on the streetcar; becoming familiar with words displayed on signs, and reading the paper.



Despite active and busy days, Guenter Horst continues to make time for his photography passion. /Photo by Thea Zubyk

“When I went to the factory where I worked as a carpenter and cabinet maker, I had to take the streetcar, which was only 10 cents to get to work,” he said. “While I was sitting on the streetcar, I looked at all the stores on Queen Street – coffee shop, restaurant, photo, furniture, you name it. I also always took a newspaper with me, or somebody left a newspaper on the seat. I looked through it and tried to look at photos and understand what it meant.”

After getting married, and living briefly near Lake Huron, Guenter saw someone on television making furniture by working with Cyprus wood from Florida. Reaching out to that person led to a job offer in Aylesbury, Saskatchewan.

“When I got to this little town of Aylesbury in Saskatchewan, I had to look twice because I didn’t see many houses,” he said – at the time, Aylesbury had a population of 86.

“I went to the old school building where this person was making furniture, introduced myself there, and he took me out, just around the corner almost, and showed me the house that was for rent,” said Guenter. “When I got into this little house, I said, you know what, for the time being, it’s OK.”

The rent was only \$75, for the whole house.

A few months later, someone in town told Guenter they had a one-and-a-half storey house available for \$500. He stayed in the rented house, but bought the other one – paying in cash – and on the weekends or after work, dove into renovations until he could leave the rented house for the purchased home and continue fixing it up while he lived in it.

“When there was spare time, I got in touch with a farmer,” he said, recalling his time spent working with a combine at harvest time. At the end of harvest time, three months of vacation meant that Guenter was back in Toronto, visiting his brother. Every so often, they’d go to his brother’s cottage, near Algonquin Park on Mink Lake.

“It was \$9,000, what they paid for the cottage,” he said. “The monthly mortgage payment was \$25, what you had to pay every month.”

When his twin’s father-in-law decided he wanted to buy a property next to Guenter’s brother and build a two-bedroom cottage, Guenter helped, building the cottage until it



Guenter Horst’s photography, which he shares with the community through local newspapers, often features wildlife or nature scenes captured around town or in his own backyard. /Photo by Guenter Horst

was complete.

“While I was living for a time at the cottage, I said to myself, I should go and look for a job in town, in Bancroft,” he said. He began working at IGA, working about three days a week, eight hours a day. He wasn’t making much money at that time, but he was living at the cottage rent-free. The owner of the IGA had a home in Naples, in Florida, and Guenter visited him, taking the opportunity to travel around Florida and also other places throughout the States.

Eventually, he found an apartment in Bancroft to be closer to work, and being divorced at that point, began looking for a social life.

“Usually when you go to Tim Hortons, it’s like a dating centre, where you meet many people,” he laughed. “I did this a couple of times in the evening and weekends and afternoon, just sitting there and seeing if I could find anything.” And then, with a big laugh: “I found something but it was not my cup of coffee.”

He phoned his sister-in-law, asking for her help to put an ad in a German newspaper looking for a partner who might be looking for a man, then aged 51 years old who “loves country music, watching movies and loves the outdoors.” Guenter said the ad specified he was interested in a woman between the ages of 45 to 50.

“I did not want a woman that was over 50, had to be below the 50,” he laughed. “I received about four letters, but the letter and picture I got from Thea, who is now my wife, was the best.”

Again, with a laugh: “She was at the borderline with the age – 49-and-a-half.”

Thea had been widowed twice, and her second husband left her a cottage in Halls Lake where she and Guenter spent a lot of time. It was while he was there, working in Minden at Home Hardware, that he found a house on Bobcaygeon Road and insisted Thea see it, though they had a house in Brampton that they hadn’t sold.

“You’ve got to come, you’ve got to see this, you won’t believe it,” he said he told her. He was convincing, and in 2006, the pair moved in, sold the cottage, and as Guenter



says, “life went on. We are now together for 24 years, and we will stay the way we are.”

Guenter said it was several years ago that he began taking photos for local newspapers, or sending in the pictures he captured on his property or throughout town. He remembers his father had an interest in oil painting, and his brother had taken aerial photos of cottage country for realtors.

“When I saw the pictures, I got myself camera equipment,” said Guenter. “Started out small and got big. I thought, ‘I can do this, too’. Maybe it runs in the family, I don’t know.”

Guenter has photographed bears and birds, deer and a wolf, and said that in sharing his photography, he hears from people that they’ve seen his work, which makes him happy. Now, although he enjoys working on refurbishing old boats and spending time – sometimes from 6 a.m. in the morning to 8 p.m. in the evening – in his heated workshop, he appreciates having time to focus on photography, too.

“All of the things I’m doing with my age, being so flexible and so ambitious, I have not seen anyone working like I do,” he said, noting he doesn’t take a break, even on weekends. “I just need something to do, and I’m just so happy where I can have my property and workshop ... We are happy. It’s a nice place to be in Minden.”



Vaccine arrives at Hyland Crest

The first Hyland Crest resident to receive the COVID-19 vaccine was Elizabeth (Betty) Inglis. Betty moved to Haliburton in 1946 to raise her family and became a very active member of the community. At 98 years old she is an avid lover of nature and conversation. /Photo submitted by HHHS

Lockdown over, but risk not diminished: MOH

by SUE TIFFIN
Times Staff

The following are brief reports from a Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge district health unit press conference held virtually Feb. 10.

As of Feb. 16, Ontario's stay-at-home orders will be lifted and public health unit regions will move back into Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework, under green, yellow, orange, red or grey colour codes that each have different levels of public health restrictions.

"That's, I think, a hopeful sign but I do want to say now, and I'll say it again, and again, and again, that this is a change in approach to control the virus, provincially, but it does not mean in any way that the risk out there is diminished," said Dr. Ian Gemmill, HKPRDHU acting medical officer of health. "Even though, for example, a stay-at-home order is not in place, I am still strongly encouraging people to stay at home unless they have a reason not to be there, so that means things like getting groceries, and I guess now, probably hair salons will be open, so that's a reason but I'm asking people to go from home, to their appointment, and home again, so that we're not doing anything to increase the transmission of this virus until such time as we're able to get vaccines into arms which is still weeks away."

Gemmill said the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge public health unit was expecting to be designated in the orange section of the colour-coding system. That was confirmed on Friday [Feb. 12].

Gemmill said the region had seen a small uptick in cases, which he hoped would not continue to increase as the lockdown measures were relaxed, and said staying at home was the "prudent"

thing to do despite the order being lifted.

"The change in the emergency order and the change in the stay-at-home order, do not change the virus out there, they do not change the epidemiology, they do not change the risk," he said.

Informal social gatherings and big family gatherings were to be avoided, said Gemmill, noting the public health unit was currently dealing with one large family outbreak as a result of a birthday party. He advised ski hills should be used by local residents to the area as opposed to "people travelling all over the province," and strongly discouraged sports events such as hockey, which he said he would not like to have happen even if it's allowed.

"I am really pleading with people, even though it is no longer a legal requirement to stay at home, I'm asking that people continue to behave this way, because this is the only way we're going to keep this virus in check until we can get vaccine in arms over the next couple of months or so," he said. "Let's not blow this by jumping the gun, thinking that just because the restrictions are relaxed, everything's 100 per cent now, it's not. It's absolutely not. And I am very worried that we might have, if people don't respect what we call advice now, rather than requirements, that we may have more cases in the next few weeks."

He reiterated numerous times during last week's press conference that his "strong advice," is to not gather, and not travel.

"I want to say really strongly to our population that 99 per cent of our population is still susceptible," he said. "Almost 99 per cent of our population has not had this infection, and that means that if they're exposed, they're susceptible, and they're quite likely to become ill."

see VARIANT page 10

A harmless coffee break can do more harm than you think.

Wear a mask, wash your hands and physically distance to stop the spread of COVID-19.
Learn more at ontario.ca/covid-19

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Ontario

ASES grad committee still working for students

by **DARREN LUM**
Times Staff

Despite the swirling uncertainties of what will and what won't happen this school year, the Archie Stouffer Elementary School graduation committee is pushing forward with efforts to fundraise for graduating students with an online silent auction.

There's a distinct possibility there won't be the conventional graduation ceremony this coming spring for Minden's Grade 8 students, but work still needs to proceed in the case it does go ahead so students' efforts are recognized, said grad committee's Cheryl Hamilton.

"Grade 8 is such a stepping stone for all students and after such a hard year, we want to give each and every one of them something to remember," Hamilton wrote in an email. "To be honest, we do not even know what this looks like currently. With June only a few months away, we are hopeful for a traditional graduation ceremony and celebration but nothing is guaranteed as we all know. And if the traditional graduation is not possible, we want to give these students a lasting memory."

She encourages the community to support this fundraiser with donations.

Those interested are asked to contact Hamilton as soon as possible at (705) 455-2500 or at cheryl@currychevrolet.ca.

Hamilton said typically fundraising for the Grade 8s would have started earlier in the

school year and has included "pop sales," which are events where students can buy pizza, popcorn and hot lunches.

"Knowing that this year was going to be a challenge for any sort of fundraising we wanted to get things rolling sooner than later," she wrote.

She adds with her background in social media marketing and experience running auctions before that an online auction was the only option for fundraising.

"It took some time getting confirmation regarding how online payment through the school would work but as soon as that was finalized, we hit the ground running. An email was sent to all Grade 8 graduating parents/guardians and the support has been overwhelming," she wrote.

Hamilton said the response from the community has so far been phenomenal.

"We have a messenger group with Grade 8 parents/guardians in it and the donations just keep flowing in every day! We are accepting monetary donations, gift certificates and new items or items in 'exceptional' condition. Please note that while we would love to accept everything, it is hard to auction used items (especially electronics) due to the warranty/follow up on any item that may not work properly after it is has been purchased," she wrote.

Hamilton, who hopes to have all donations by Feb. 15, is putting together packages to auction off and taking the requisite images. She said she will accept donations the rest of

the week.

The auction goes live on Facebook starting on March 1 and will close on March 15. All details regarding rules, how to bid, how to pay will be posted to the Facebook group titled, ASES 2021 GRAD (www.facebook.com/ASES-2021-GRAD-Auction-101170148629937).

Variant arrives in health unit region

from page 9

Variant reported in health unit region

At the Feb. 10 media briefing, Gemmill said there has, as of Feb. 9, been one documented instance in the health unit's region – in Northumberland County - in which a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a resident of Port Hope was discovered to be a variant, though which variant has not, at press time, been confirmed. The person affected is in isolation and contacts have all been quarantined.

Three COVID-19 variants of concern – one first identified in the United Kingdom in Nov. 2020, a South African variant identified in Dec. 2020 and a variant first detected in Brazilian travellers in Japan in Jan. 2021 - two which are known to be spreading in Canada, have been monitored over the past few months, due in part to their being highly transmissible.

Gemmill said though there has been one case of the variant being detected locally, there will be more, noting the variants of concern are likely to become the predominant strains.

"Pretty much inevitable, these variants are going to be more and more prevalent as time goes on, as you've heard," he said. "The fact that we've had one, I'm not really surprised."

In a press release, Gemmill said the identification of the variant in the community means that it is more important than ever that residents continue to be vigilant and follow the public health measures to help stop the spread of the virus.

dose.

"The only way we are going to control these infections and outbreaks at long-term care is to get everyone as immunized as we possibly can," said Gemmill. For that reason, he said that it would make sense to ensure that when more vaccines come in, priority is given to the second shot for residents prior to the next group of people, though he said another idea might be to give initial doses of vaccine to more people.

"I hope we have enough vaccine at that point in time ... that this will not be an issue," said Gemmill. "But yes, if we are faced with not that much vaccine, I would say that to protect those people in long-term care and to stop these outbreaks, which are ... extremely worrisome for the residents, extremely worrisome for the family, hugely stressful for the people who are looking after people in long-term care, for all of these reasons we have to get these things stopped."

Public invited to 'Talk with the Doc' virtual town hall

Dr. Gemmill, acting medical officer of health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District health unit, hosted the health unit's first 'Talk with the Doc' virtual town hall on Tuesday, Feb. 16.

During the online information session, Gemmill provided updates on COVID-19 topics including local cases and transmission rates, local vaccine roll-out plans, and the health unit's pandemic response and related topics, as well as answered questions from those tuning in.

"I would like to reach as many people as possible and hear as many questions as possible, not only to help people know what's going on with this pandemic, but also so I can hear what the concerns are out there," said Gemmill while promoting the event during last week's press conference.

A second virtual town hall will be held Tuesday, March 2, from 1 to 2 p.m.

Gemmill said if the session was popular, it could be held on a regular basis. The town halls will also be uploaded after live events to the health unit's YouTube channel for those who can't attend in real-time.

Vaccine priority continues to be long-term care residents

Residents at Extendicare, Highland Wood and Hyland Crest long-term care homes have at this point received their first of two vaccines, the second which can be administered no earlier than the first week of March to ensure length of time between doses and efficacy. Gemmill was asked if, when more vaccines are available in the area, long-term care residents would receive their second dose or if healthcare workers would receive their first

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Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 12

COVID-19 Contacts, Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by County								
County	Current Cases Not Resolved	Current High Risk Contacts	Current Probable Cases	Confirmed Cases (Total to date)	Confirmed Cases Resolved (Total to Date)	Hospitalizations (Total to date)	Confirmed Deaths (Total to date)	Probable Deaths (Total to date)
Haliburton	1	2	0	51	50	2	0	0
Kawartha Lakes	28	138	2	515	449	26	38	13
Northumberland	20	114	3	412	381	11	11	0
Total***	49	284	5	978	880	39	49	13

On Feb. 16, zero new confirmed cases of COVID-19 were being reported in Haliburton County by the local health unit, with one current case not resolved and two current high-risk contacts included in the daily update. For more information visit <http://www.hkpr.on.ca./Screenshot from HKPRDHU website>

Haliburton County Council!

The Haliburton County Home Builders Association would like to thank the Haliburton County Council for taking the initiative to redirect the proposed shoreline bylaw to an independent third party to review and oversee. We look forward to being part of the solution!

Lakefront Property Owners,

The Haliburton County Home Builders Association has spent the last few weeks bringing forward a few facts regarding the proposed Shoreline By-law that the County of Haliburton is attempting to implement. The goal of our media campaign is to bring awareness of the By-law to the waterfront property owners in the County.

The HCHBA is urging you to contact your municipal elected officials, Lake Association Executive as well as your M.P. and M.P.P. to voice your concerns and to ask questions. We also encourage you to visit the HCHBA website (www.hchba.ca/resources) where we have posted information relating to the proposed Shoreline Preservation By-law. We ask you to speak to your neighbours about their thoughts and we encourage you to write our local newspapers with your concerns.

The 30-metre setback from high-water mark is problematic. The high-water mark can be hard to identify and with the constant fluctuations within our local lakes it can be ever changing due to the erosion that these fluctuations cause. A more reasonable setback (5 metres) with high quality vegetation required for all lakefront properties would be a great start.

The process of understanding what projects require a permit and which ones do not needs to be clear, concise and easy for the homeowner or contractor to understand.

Will this bylaw require an Environmental Impact Studies or an Archaeological Assessment?

Will permits be required for road maintenance on private roads within the 30 m highwater mark?

Will there be an appeal process if a permit is denied?

The County of Haliburton needs to make a commitment to invest time and resources towards conducting their own independent research into other factors that could lead to the potential deterioration in the health of our local water bodies. Where is the evidence that provoked this bylaw to be created?

If this bylaw gets passed as is and no more development is done on the shoreline, will they be healthy?

If you have any questions, we at the HCHBA recommend that you write, email, or call your municipal elected officials with your comments or concerns. The Draft Bylaw and Questions and Answers can be found on our website under 'Resources' at www.hchba.ca



Haliburton County
Home Builders Association
www.hchba.ca

#Building with the Environment in Mind

Seventh year for Make Dreams Come True

by **DARREN LUM**
Times Staff



**NOTICE
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS
2021 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

NOTE: As a result of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak, as well as the requirements for social distancing, Council Meetings will be conducted electronically via web conference until further notice.

TAKE NOTICE that Council will begin its 2021 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Monday, February 22, 2021** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Council will continue its 2021 budget deliberations during a **Special Meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2021** commencing at 9:00 a.m. conducted electronically via web conference.

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by joining a live-stream link. The live-stream link can be found in the Council Meeting Notice posted on the Township's website under the News and Notices at www.algonquinhighlands.ca

Dated this 10th day of February, 2021.

Dawn Newhook, Municipal Clerk
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1J1
T: (705) 489-2379 x333
E: dnewhook@algonquinhighlands.ca

Chapters of achievement still need to be recognized now more than ever said Jenn Abbott of Make Dreams Come True, a community initiative to provide free formal clothing to graduating students.

Abbott, who is a mother of four, said it's a difficult time for everyone with the pandemic.

She believes this year's graduation will be virtual and it's yet another loss in a series of losses during this difficult time.

"Basically, it's like their graduation is being taken away from them. It's only going to be virtual. So that means they're not going to have a dance. They can't walk across the stage. Most of their family won't be able to be there in person so Chantal and I have discussed this, as we discussed it last year as well," she said, referencing Chantal Smith, a photographer that has offered her services through Make Dreams Come True since the start.

"We want to be able to capture those memories. I mean this is a milestone in a child's life that should be remembered. So, if I can get them dressed up and make them feel good about themselves and feeling happy about their accomplishment and getting a picture to capture that, then by all means I will keep this going. If we have the pandemic for 10 years down the road, I will still be trying to offer the services that we offer," she said.

It's been seven years since the community initiative started, which has collected thousands of donated formal clothing from dresses to suits, with complementary articles such as dress shoes, purses and ties, and outfitted graduating students from adolescents to young adults an opportunity to wear a formal outfit for dances and ceremonies.

Although there weren't any conventional graduation ceremonies to wear formal clothing last year, Abbott still facilitated the opportunity to dress formally for modified outdoor events and for photos with family for the visual keepsake of the academic highlight.

Another benefit to Make Dreams Come True, Abbott said, is there really isn't an in-person option to shop with the recent lockdown.

"During the pandemic it's more important than ever because a lot of the people can't take their child into a store and go shopping. With what I do is I try to [provide] options for them. They can take it home and try it on and go from there," she said.

She adds the effort is all about giving a young person a reason to smile.

If what she provides doesn't work for the student, she said the search will continue "until we find an outfit that is special and perfect for them."

Last year, Abbott, who has the autoimmune disease, colitis, implemented COVID-19 protocols when providing outfits to safeguard the students and their families receiving clothing, but her and her family at home, which includes an 11-year-old, five-year-old and a baby.

Unlike last year she will be accepting donations with a

"contact free" practice of having donations placed on a designated table outside her house.

"If people are at home and they're cleaning out their closets, or a parent cleaning out their kids' rooms because they no longer live there, [please donate]. So they might have stuff in the closet they want to donate and that would be perfect for Make Dreams Come True. That's why I put it out there," she said.

Although in the past, the community initiative included a full range of services, it's still dependent on what is permitted to open by the health unit, but Abbott said she has already established promises with local businesses such as salons from previous years.

"I'm just trying to give back to the community. I'm trying to give back to the parents because at the end of the day prom and grad dresses are expensive. With the pandemic, a lot of people don't have the money to go out to spend \$400 or \$500 on a dress," she said.

Ideally, she said students interested in her service are encouraged to contact her by phone or through Facebook, which she prefers. Include details such as size, colour preferences, and photo examples depicting ensembles or articles of clothing.

Abbott encourages people to contact her much sooner than June when graduations occur to ensure graduating students get what they want though.

"It's better if people message me sooner just because I have everything stored away and it's in bins. So the sooner they can do that the better and I can start looking. I might be able to pull five dresses and then I would bag them up and I would tell the person to come pick them up. Then they would take them home. Try them on. Whatever outfit they don't end up using they would just bring it back to me and that's it," she said.

Make Dreams Come True also offers a photo session from local photographer Chantal Smith.

"If you get an outfit from me then Chantal will offer a photo session for them and their family," she said. Abbott adds the number of people permitted to be in the same place for the photo session will be limited because of COVID-19 restrictions. Coordinate with Smith for more details.

After seven years, Abbott said this initiative should be done everywhere and that it isn't possible without the support from the community, whether it's the donors or the many businesses, who contribute services or free products.

"I really think every town should be doing this because it's so easy and so simple. It gives back to the community. I mean it is a community effort because without the donations I wouldn't be able to do what I do," she said.

Those interested can call Abbott at (705) 286-0906 or message her through Facebook at her personal account (www.facebook.com/jennifer.abbott.12) or Make Dreams Come True.

Community Events

Send your events listing to
Pat Lewis at classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

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OneHSN.com/KawarthaLakes
to find out more or to register.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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7	3	5	4	8	2	6	9	1
2	1	8	9	6	3	5	4	7
4	6	9	1	5	7	2	3	8



Chill on the hill

Archie Stouffer Elementary School student Blakelee Harrison slides sideways, but maintains an eye on the bottom of the hill while tobogganing on Friday, Feb. 12 in Minden. As long as the windchill temperature isn't lower than negative 20 Celsius the students will go outside for exercise. /DARREN LUM Staff

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400 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

560 ANNOUNCEMENTS

560 ANNOUNCEMENTS



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In Loving Memory of **Craig Faulkner Windsor**

On February 4, 2021 we lost a great man. Craig (aka the Duke, Curly, Pops, Pa), peacefully listening to Patsy Cline, with family by his side, he danced his way to his next adventure. Wishing him "Sweet Dreams".

Craig was a dear friend, an amazing son, father, uncle and grandpa. He charmed all those who crossed his path. He cherished the time he had with those he met in his many journeys and was always excited to see and spend time with new and old friends. He met each day with a smile and had a genuine love for everyone. He enjoyed life to the fullest.

The son of Maurice and Blanche Windsor, loving brother of Garth & Helen, Phyllis & Don. Amazing father to Rob, Mike & Shelly, Colin and Cindy & Rob. Awesome Grampa of Elladee & Jesse, Briar, Noah, Jadyn and Joshua. Special family to Lew & Laurel, Carole & Bill, Larry & Lisa and Dean. Loving uncle to his many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers Craig would appreciate donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0. Due to current restrictions, a date for Craig's celebration of life has not been set.



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Mark Barrett
Next Week: The Strollers

Wednesday, March 23, 1983

County budget tops million mark

The Haliburton County budget has surpassed the million dollar mark. The budget of \$1,061,880 was endorsed at the March 16 meeting of county council. Last year's budget at the county level was just shy of the million dollar mark at \$981,600.

While the county councillors have agreed to spend over a million dollars in 1983, not all of that will be coming directly from the municipal taxpayer's pockets. A 20% portion of that amount, some

\$200,000 will be received through grants from the province, and revenue earned through fees charged for land division hearings, the rental for the land registry office, and several other sources of income. This means that the municipalities will have to provide \$863,000 to support the county's activities.

The chairman of the management committee, Dysart Reeve Murray Fearrey, who introduced the budget and explained the highlights from the document

noted that one of the major increases this year was a \$15,000 reserve fund which has been established to cover accumulated sick leave of county employees and to be used as working funds. Fearrey said the budget committee was concerned about the number of sick leave days being accumulated by the employees. He said that problems could arise if a number of long term employees, with many sick day credits, decided to retire. Under the provisions of the

agreement with its employees, the county must reimburse employees for a certain number of unused sick days when they leave the employ of the county.

Under the program devised by the committee, \$15,000 will be set aside during the next three years to bring the fund up to \$45,000 by 1985. Fearrey suggested the \$15,000 per year was not too sizeable an amount to set aside in this year of restraints.

Fearrey told the meeting the committee has recommended that the special fund be "protected" from being used for other purposes by enacting a by-law outlining its purpose. He noted this would leave the incoming county council, in December 1985, with a fund of \$45,000 to cover any major requests made on the sick leave fund.

Chamber gets \$60,000

With the controversial comments made by Anson, Hindon and Minden councillor Gary Kenney concerning the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce still fresh in their minds, the members of the council agreed to give the organization an additional \$10,000 in funding in 1983. The Chamber's budget allotment has been raised from \$50,000 to \$60,000. As well, \$500 has been set aside for the operation of the information booth in Cardiff Township.

Last year the Haliburton Economic Development Commission had received separate funding from the county. This year, the responsibilities of the organization have been reduced and its administration will be handled through the Chamber's budget.

Addressing the council seriously, Fearrey said the \$60,000 allotment to the Chamber amounts to about one dollar per household in the county. Fearrey said he felt this amount would be judged to be reasonable, "even to those among us who have an insatiable thirst to be anti-Chamber."

The councillors were told that members of the committee had discussed the issue of the Chamber funding extensively during the committee meeting. Members include Anson, Hindon and Minden Reeve Lyle McKnight, Monmouth Reeve Keith Tallman and Warden Bill Howe, as well as chairman Murray Fearrey.

The county's representative on the Chamber of Commerce, Stanhope Deputy Reeve Elgin Stouffer, was also included in the discussion.

Fearrey seemed upset with suggestions in the Kenney report that the county "lacked responsibility" in overseeing the funds it grants to the Chamber. He noted that the Chamber provides the county with two detailed reports on its activities each year and that monthly reports are offered by the council's representative, Elgin Stouffer.

Major categories

In presenting the budget for 1983, the figures were divided into seven major sections, each related to a particular area of service provided by the county.

The largest budget section was the roads budget. \$555,000 has been allocated to roads this year, an increase of \$75,000 over last year.

A large section of that budget has been earmarked as the county's portion of an upgrading of County Road

number one, formerly Highway 519. Under an agreement with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the county will spend \$50,000 with the provincial government contributing an additional \$250,000 each year for the next five years. The province's participation was part of an agreement worked out when the county agreed with the province to exchange the Vankoughnet Road for Highway 519.

Fearrey noted that "a good deal of time" was spent on the details of the road budget. He noted that the roads provide a primary access to the county and the committee felt the expense was justified. He also pointed out that the additional construction activity will help the local economy.

An increase of \$12,000 was allowed in the general government section of the budget. This section, which covers the administrative

(more on page 2)

Councils share info service

A proposal to share in a promotional effort with the township of Lutterworth was approved in principle at the March 10 meeting of Anson, Hindon and Minden township council. Before the vote was taken however, Deputy Reeve Ed Pergolas received a verbal slap on the wrist from the Reeve, Lyle McKnight.

The two townships have agreed to co-ordinate a joint promotional effort which will utilize land located on Highway 35 in Lutterworth Township. The site will be used for an information booth and sign board, pointing out sites of interest and activities taking place in the two municipalities.

The site is located on the west side of the highway near the Forest Echo Motel. Exact details as to how the information service will operate, when it will be staffed and how the costs will be shared have yet to be established.

The booth will be similar to ones being operated in Haliburton Village by the municipality of Dysart, and on Highway 121 by the municipality of Cardiff.

Reeve McKnight's comments to Deputy Reeve Ed

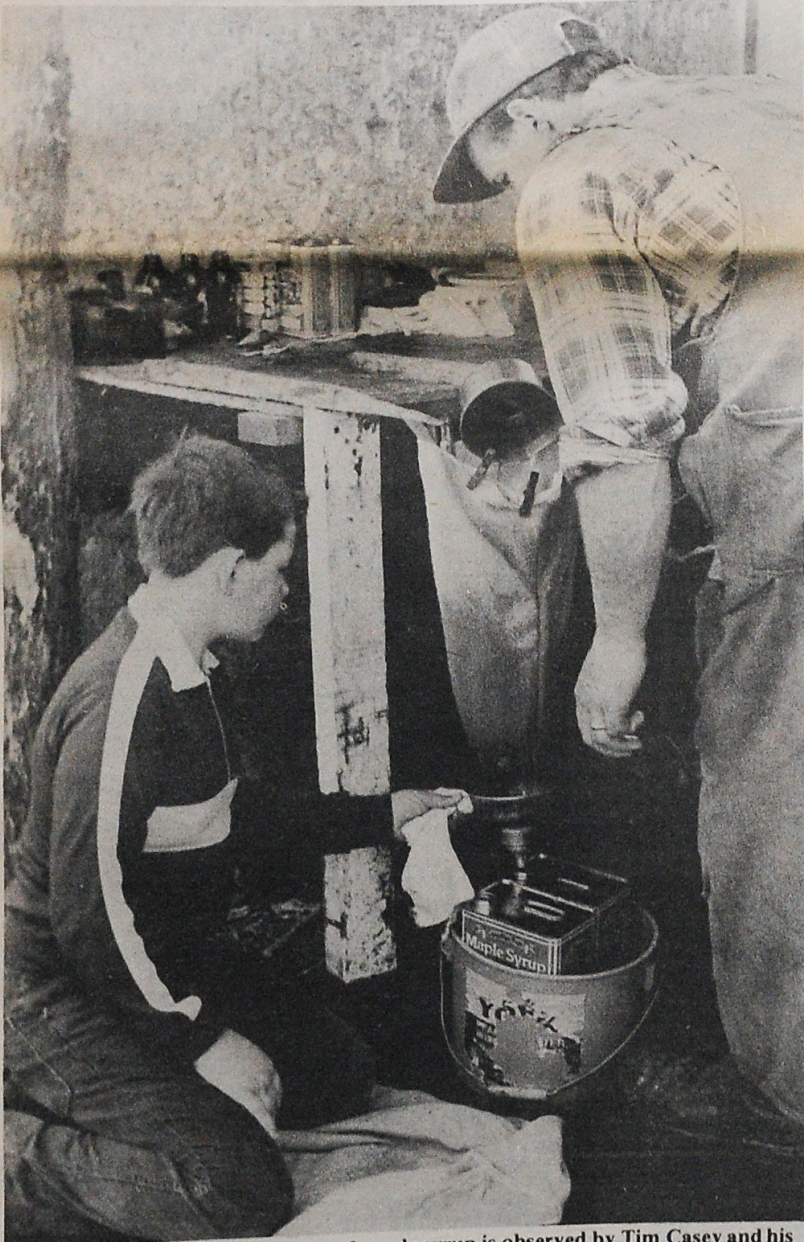
Pergolas concerned an article which appeared in the March 9 edition of the Haliburton County Echo. In that article the deputy reeve was quoted as saying the council was committed to proceeding with the joint venture.

McKnight pointed out that the matter (at that point in the meeting) had not been voted on by the council. "I feel something like this should come to the council first before appearing in the press," McKnight said. "What if we decided today that we were not going to do it?" the reeve asked.

He pointed out that through the article, one member of the council had committed the entire council to a certain position. "Until we have a resolution, passed by this council, a member of council shouldn't commit this council to anything," McKnight stated.

Deputy Reeve Pergolas admitted that he had acted incorrectly in saying what the council would do prior to the council approving it.

A vote was then taken on the matter and the proposal was approved in principle.



The final stage in the production of maple syrup is observed by Tim Casey and his son Pat. The syrup was prepared for market Sunday following a weekend of sap collection. The Casey farm was one of three visited by members of the Haliburton County Farmer's Association in a familiarization tour Saturday. For more pictures, please turn to page 5.

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